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CENTENARY OF THE ACADEMY OF NATURAL SCIENCES.

The Society has received an invitation to be represented at the celebration of the centenary anniversary of the founding of the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia, on March nineteenth to twenty-first next. Mr. Edward Pennock, second vice-president of the American Microscopical Society, and Dr. H. L. Shantz, of Bureau of Plant Industry, Washington, D. C., have been named as delegates representing this society.

A NEW ROTARY MICROTOME.

The Spencer Lens Company have recently come out with a new rotary microtome which obviates the difficulties inherent in the old rotary microtomes, and provides for cutting sections of uniform and even thickness with the same accuracy and delicacy that have heretofore been obtained only on the best sliding microtomes. Any person interested in such a microtome would do well to write the Spencer Lens Co. for circular describing this instrument.

AN EARLY LETTER OF R. B. TOLLES.

In the light of the recent action of the Executive Committee of the American Microscopical Society to retain the administration of the Spencer-Tolles memorial fund within the Society and to begin using the income of the fund as soon as practicable as a memorial, the following letter, written by Mr. Tolles when he was twenty years of age, will prove interesting. It is furnished by the wife of the late Charles X. Dalton.

Canastota, June 30, '44.

My Dear Grandfather :

I handed a letter to Father while he was here to yourself, stating that I hoped to be in Conn. by this present time. You may not yet have received that letter; I now write for that reason and because I do not incur the expense of postage. Father then (when here) intended to be in Conn. soon to see you and hand you the letter. I imagine he has not gone as yet.

I had every reason to suppose when I borrowed the money of you last fall that I should be able to return it by the last spring past. The reason that I was and am not at present is, that I have not rec'd one half of my wages (at \$2 per week, and board and clothes out of that). The arrangement I made with Mr. Spencer was that there should be no stated times of payments, but rather at his convenience, as his orders are large and time inter-

venes between them. But I did not suppose it would be so inconveniently that way, as in fact. However, it will be right at the end of the year, next Oct., and I do not suppose it likely that I will be able to pay the \$10 before; but then it *shall* come with interest. The most unpleasant part of the matter is that I am not able to do anything for my sisters, but I *shall* do more after the time mentioned. I am in a situation to learn a good deal that will be profitable to me hereafter, in a *dollar and cents* view, too, and therefore I take up with a good deal of inconvenience and some *chagrin*, which is better by the way, than with a tinsel character to be an adventurer *upon* the world; for it *ends* well.

We have been making Daguerreotype Instruments for taking portraits. I am now making myself one. I may have such word from New York as to enable me to take it east and finally sell it in N. Y. or otherwheres. I suppose we make better instruments of this kind than are made *otherwheres*. This of mine will be worth \$15 to \$25. I have thought some of going abroad and taking portraits myself, but that is somewhat slow. I wish much to see you and more especially to hear from you by *letter* that you enjoy *health*, etc.

Your affectionate Grandson,

R. B. TOLLES.

Father expects to make sale of an improvement on the Rail Road Cos. for the prevention of accidents from the "Snake heads" as they call them (a loosend rail bent up at the end, a frequent thing). Mr. Spencer, my employer, has taken the negotiations into his hands, and it is quite probable that it may result favorably. R. B. T.

A NEW MEDIUM FOR DARK-FIELD OBSERVATION—"THE LEITZ CONCENTRIC REFLECTING CONDENSER."

This improved Reflecting Condenser, the invention of Dr. Felix Jentzsch,* of the scientific department of E. Leitz, Wetzlar, is adapted for observation under dark-ground illumination, and more especially for bringing into view living and unstained bacteria.

Every Microscopist familiar with the darkground illuminating apparatus has certainly realized the importance of such an instrument, and it undoubtedly will interest him to learn that E. Leitz has now introduced a new type of Darkfield Condenser, the so-called "Concentric Reflecting Condenser."

The object of this method is to establish an extremely vivid contrast between the intensely illuminated bacteria and the dark back-ground. To obtain such a dark back-ground it is essential

*Physikalische Zeitschrift, Vol. 11, pp. 993-1000, 1910, and Verhandlungen der deutschen Physikalischen Gesellschaft, Vol. 12, pp. 975-991, 1910. Paper read on the 22 Sept., 1910, before the 82nd German Congress of Science and Medicine at Königsberg.